

December 7, 2005

Conference Call Summary

Participants

Bob Davis, USGS
John LaFave & Tom Patton, Bureau of Mines and Geology
Mike McLane, DNRC
Gretchen Rupp, Montana Water Center
Marc Spratt, Clark Fork Basin Task Force (Task Force)
Bill Woessner, Riverine Center
Gerald Mueller, Task Force Facilitator

Call Subject

Discuss the Task Force idea of convening a technical conference about Clark Fork River basin ground water and its interaction with surface water.

Discussion

The following ideas, suggestions, and comments were offered by the call participants;

- In order to answer the Task Force's three questions (what do we know about the basin ground water, what do we need to know, and how to get the needed information), the Task Force needs to identify the purpose for answering them. In other words, what management issues/questions is the Task Force trying to address?
- An appropriate framing question might be: how can we sustain water development in the Clark Fork basin while maintaining the ecological function of its streams and meeting instream and downstream water uses?
- A second framing question might be: how far do we carry science into policy determinations?
- Another possible conference topic might be how other states such as Colorado and Idaho are approaching quantifying, monitoring, and regulating ground water and ground water-surface water interactions.
- The conference might also critique the ground water characterization program to assure that the appropriate types and amount of data is being developed.
- The Water Center and the MSU Wheeler Center are planning a conference on water policy and law on September 18-20 in Bozeman.
- The UM Riverine Center is planning its annual conference for September 21-22.

Next Steps

- Identify Task Force basin water management questions necessary to frame the conference. (*Gerald Mueller*)
- Explore funding for a white paper providing background information for conference participants about the ground water in each of the five subbasins of the Clark Fork, i.e. upper Clark Fork, Blackfoot, Bitterroot, Flathead, and lower Clark Fork. (*Gerald Mueller*)
- Propose a way to input information about other related state activities into the conference. (*Mike McLane*)
- Visit with the Montana Chapter of the Montana Water Resources Association about adding a technical session on the Clark Fork basin ground water to its October 2006 conference in Polson. (*Mike McLane & Gerald Mueller*)
- Find out information about a November conference that Governor Schweitzer may convene about watersheds and economic development. (*Mike McLane*)
- Discuss how the Water Center and the Riverine Center might work together on a water policy conference in late September 2006. (*Bill Woessner & Gretchen Rupp*)
- Reconvene this steering committee in early January 2006. (*Mike McLane & Gerald Mueller*)